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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

BOOK NOTICES.

KIDNAPPED, the latest book by Robert Louis Stevenson, has been published in this country by SCRIBNERS SONS. In many ways it is a remarkable work, one that will doubtless have a long life though never, we think, a popular one. Its title suggests rather more than the chapters fulfill, it promises unusual and peculiar adventures and novel and wonderful situations, and while the adventures are certainly extraordinary and the situations noticeable, they are neither startling nor yet more than ordinarily interesting. There is a feeling in the reader, we imagine, that must be akin to that experienced by one who is not thoroughly imbued with the spirit of classic music and sits through a concert of Wilhelmj, the apparent preparing to play is really playing, that which the uneducated assumes to be "tuning up" is in fact brilliant execution, and when the performer concludes his evident preliminary and the uneducated looks for the coming of the "air," lo! the performer walks off amid the applause of the knowing ones. So with KIDNAPPED, there is the constant expectancy with the reader that something better is to come, and it never comes. The wanderings of David Balfour and Alan Breck through upper Scotland, and of which this volume is the chronicle, are well described in language that is agreeable to read and quaint in its construction, this is one of the elements constituting all that is remarkable or noticeable about the book, the other elements are the manner in which the author has sustained the unnatural style throughout, the absolute naturalness of the incidents and the number of pages to which it has been extended considering the very small thread that the story hangs upon. On the other hand there is nothing learned from the reading, there are a few happy remarks by the principals that attract attention at the moment, but are not sufficiently strong to make a lasting impression, there are no new ideas, no new train of thought started, no questions of law, politics or philosophy that may excite the readers' mind to investigation or even contemplation; there is absolutely no impression left excepting that a literary curiosity has been finished. Yet it is remarkable, as we have said; it approaches very closely to the highest ideal of literature, one step more and it would have lived beside De Foe's greatest work, but the one step is still to be taken. Those who read it will do so out of respect for its style, for its literary merit, and that is what leads us to think it will not be popular.

VERY different is Mr. Stevenson's previous book and remarkably successful one, THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, which has hit popular fancy to the extent of 25,000 copies, and yet it indicates a lower order of ability by many degrees than Kidnapped; it has not an iota of the talent put into it that appears in the latter, it is an absurd idea, clumsily worked out, most confusedly written in the first two or three chapters, and altogether unworthy from either a literary or sensational standpoint of the sale it has experienced. The story is of a physician and student (Dr. Jekyll) who finds himself possessed of the ability to draw away from himself the evil in his nature and clothe it in the form of an individuality distinct from his own. In this shape, as Mr. Hyde, the Doctor indulges in murder and other pastimes until the fascination for crime is greater than the regard for virtue, and Mr. Hyde grows in stature with the increased evil, finally subjugating his moral annex absolutely, and the Doctor finds it impossible to return from his assumed form to his natural body. The plot is by no means a new one, it has been done before in about the same manner and to compare it with any production of Poe's (as some fulsome eulogists have done) is an insult to both Poe and Stevenson, for the author must realize that would be even an insult to the numerous family of Hugh Conway. (SCRIBNERS SONS, N. Y.)

MISFITS AND REMNANTS, is a collection of clever short stories by Ventura and Shevitch, two Italian journalists in this city. The tales are exceedingly brief, some we wish were longer, and mostly descriptive of Italian life in New York. There is a sad story of two children kidnapped from their distant home and sold here to one of the padrones, who lived off the labors of the children he bought and beat; another of the efforts of a model to return to her lover in the old country is quite touching, and "Only a Dog" is an excellent picture of dock life and the actual experience of every day. The impressionable and honest boot-black makes a worthy hero, and even the fee-exacting waiter is turned into something half-way decent by the pen of the authors. His story, Herr Baron, we think the best in the collection, although the title must not be too generously bestowed upon the waiters of the city, for if they could be accepted as types of foreign nobility, the cause of monarchies becoming effete would be easy of explanation. (TICKNOR & Co., Boston.)

WHEN a guide book is exact and can be relied upon, it is a valuable possession to any one. Time tables at the best are puzzles, but confidence in their correctness often encourages working them out, but when they are a long way from being correct,

when a train actually leaves at 4 o'clock and the guide book reports 4:15 as the hour, and you walk about the depot killing time and pitying those who hurry—until it is too late, then the book becomes a torment and an enemy and life is a torture for a time. That is just what is the matter with Reid's Rail Road Guide, sent us from J. A. & R. A. Reid, N. Y. City. We may, perhaps, feel slightly overheated on this subject and on this book, for we planned a trip on the strength of its information and we were gloriously left by sundry trains. Our experience and our opinion are about equally severe.

CASELL & COMPANY (New York) have given us some of the most entertaining handy volumes of short stories that have recently been issued. The several series that they have made up have been especially good and the latest, "Casell's Select Library," appears to be the best. The Library consists of paper bound volumes, selling at fifteen cents each, and consisting of stories by leading writers, stories that are agreeable at all times to read and have in them much of merit and value. The volumes already issued are "Who Took It?" "A Race for Life," "My Night Adventure," "The Great Gold Secret," "A Wife's Confession," "Snowed Up," "Checkmated," taking their names from the title of one story in each number.

ANOTHER admirable series is "Casell's National Library," which has published a large number of the classic and standard works in a ten cent volume, handy in size and clear and plain in print. Among the latest issues are "Crabbe's Poems," "Cowley's Essays," "Sir Roger de Coverley and the Spectator Club," "Battle of the Books," all works that are familiar to every reader, though in the main are very little read. They all should be read, however, and when they can be had in as compact and economical a form as in the "National Library," there is no reason why and no excuse for not reading them.

THIS is the season and the present part of the century seems to be the era for elaborate catalogues. Some of the finest examples of engraving and printing that has yet come to our attention has been in catalogues from business houses. That from B. C. BIBB & SON, Stoves, Ranges, etc., Baltimore, is particularly handsome, both in the design for its covers and the richness of its inside pages, all being printed in a brilliant purple that is striking. The covers have a livening addition of gold bronze that harmonizes well with the green and buff about it. The season's styles that Messrs. Bibb & Son call attention to in the illustrations are all artistic and unquestionably new, those that are worthy of especial study are the "Grand Emerald," "Solid South," "Cecil," "Avalon," "Arcadia," "Glymont" and "Calvert."

MARTIN WORN & SONS, Furniture, Brooklyn, N. Y., have also made up a very attractive catalogue of their goods, that compares very favorably with anything we have had sent to us. It contains over fifty pages and 200 illustrations of new pieces of furniture in Chamber Suits, Sideboards, Wardrobes, Cheffonières, Hall Stands, etc., and if those who are purchasing such pieces find as much to admire in the designs as we did they would unquestionably buy largely. There are some suits of majestic proportions, with heavy carving, that deserve all the attention that is given them. The catalogue is a worthy production.

STILL another catalogue, that of C. HENNECKE & Co., Milwaukee, entitled Florentine Statuary and Art Studies, being a complete illustrated price list of the Casts and Statuettes made by that firm. There are two volumes to the catalogue, bound in leather paper and printed in tints. To dealers in these goods the books are of considerable value, for they indicate what may be had and the price of each piece. To artists and designers also they have value, as there is a collection of historic and well known statues useful in many ways to one interested in art.

SHOPPELL'S MODERN HOUSES, Vol. I., No. 3, contains a number of designs for country houses or houses intended for small cities, of great value to builders and those contemplating building. This issue is merely a continuation of previous numbers and a forerunner to future ones, all of which are equally useful and each worth the one dollar charged for it. In No. 3 there is an exterior, showing proper combination of colors, a model kitchen, fifty-five designs, with plans, for modern houses, an article on low cost construction, the cistern, a small church, stable and carriage house and some entertaining reading matter. Published quarterly by the Co-operative Building Plan Association, 191 Broadway, N. Y.

HOUSEHOLD SANITATION, by William E. Hoyt, C. E., published by TICKNOR & Co., Boston, is a valuable and interesting essay upon the subject that appeals to the greatest number of persons. It explains in the clearest language the cause of unhealthy houses and the ignorance that makes defective plumbing possible. There is so much to say on this very important topic, and Mr. Hoyt has said it so well, that we recommend his book to all who have a house and wish to keep it healthy and free from impurities.